

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL

Summer Summit – August 8 and 9, 2002

Jorgenson's Inn & Suites – Room 156

Helena, Montana

Members Present: Kelly Johnson (chair), Gwen Beyer, Brian Lenhardt, Shelly Korth, Patti Russ, Lucy Hart-Paulson, Dan McCarthy, Ted Maloney, Sandi Marisdotter, Phyllis Astheimer, Denise King, Sandy McGinnis, Novelene Martin, Lynda Korth, Sylvia Danforth, Cris Volinkaty, John Holbrook

Members Excused: Liz Harter, Barb Stefanic, Anne Marie Johnson, Jackie Jandt, John Holbrook (Thursday), Gerald Pease.

Others Present: Richard Van Haecke, Part C Coordinator for DDP; Jackie Emerson, DDP Administrative Support

1ST DAY:

OLD BUSINESS:

Review and approve minutes - The minutes from the two past meetings will be reviewed and approved as other members arrive and there is a quorum.

Wage and Hour Law/Impact - Cris and Sylvia will be dividing time between the Council meeting and the Special Session of the Legislature so their part of the agenda will be addressed when they can be present.

Public Awareness Committee – Ted reported that this committee needs to be activated to work on the Public Awareness effort. The committee consists of Ted, Patti, Sandi, and Lucy. Ted will work with Richard to set up a meeting after the Special Session is over. The Child Find grant has probably \$15,000 in funds that might be used to promote Public Awareness depending on the project. The grant is good for another two years.

ISSC Subcommittee on Child and Family Services – Richard reported on the meeting of the ISSC Subcommittee. They are still looking at opening up to new providers. There have been reports of complaints about decisions made by provider organizations. Ted commented that he had heard there were 8-9 complaints, which out of 900 clients was not a very high percentage. Shelly commented that if there were more providers there would not be fewer complaints. The consensus was that more providers could make for more confusion for parents starting into the process of finding a provider and that it would cost more to administer the program. Ted stated that even health providers do not provide a choice in many places because of the small size of the population.

*Cris and Sylvia arrived from the Special Session and reported on the bills and amendments being addressed.

Richard said the Legislative Finance Division is very interested in having the DDP implement some form of cost sharing (sliding fee scale) by service participants. They are also very interested in the Department making sure all clients who are eligible are on Medicaid.

Wage and Hour Law - Cris reported that a bill is being drafted for the respite wage and hour issue that would make workers exempt as independent contractors. It would make it much easier on families. A copy of the bill will be sent to Mary Kissell to make sure it complies with Federal statutes. The bill is designed around the current companionship law.

Montana's application for 2002 Part C funding – Richard reported that the application has been approved and that \$2,044,000 had been allocated for Part C. He will send a copy to each corporation. The State is committed to the plan as written for this year. There was a discussion of the rumors that have circulated about moving Part C to Education or having Education monitor early intervention services and also of the possibility of building incentives so that the State could receive more money than usually allotted (the example given was to provide incentives to step-up child find efforts in the state to find children in need of services at an earlier point in their lives).

DPHHS report:

The Operations budget is being cut severely for the current fiscal year. Full details are not yet available.

There is a hiring freeze that will probably be in effect for the next 3 years. DDP will be looking at what it will be capable of at current levels as well as if there are even fewer workers.

CMS is coming in September and that may have some serious repercussions.

Because of the hiring freeze the Region II Manager position will not be filled. Plans are being made to possibly move to a 4-region system by November 1.

The Quality Assurance position will also not be hired. John Zeeck will take over as QA Specialist and will continue as Grants and Special Project Coordinator while Perry Jones will take over as Rules Specialist and will continue as Waiver Coordinator. Richard will continue in the Child and Family Specialist position.

(The Council took a break at 10:30 – at 10:50 Kelly called the meeting back to order.)

Update on Qualified Provider process for Child and Family Services – Richard reported that AWARE had been the only application for Qualified Provider status for Child and Family Services and was approved for IFE&S for Regions 4 & 5. They will be at the screenings for Regions 4 & 5. There have been no other applications thus far.

Millie Kindle's resignation: Kelly has received Millie's resignation as Parent Representative for Region I so that position on the Council will need to be filled.

Novelene stated that the Council might need to look at the restructuring of the DDP regions since there will be 4 instead of 5.

The bylaws were read and there may need to be some changes made since they do mention 5 regions.

Sylvia will check to find a parent from Region I to replace Millie on the Council. It was requested that they start the November meeting with a parent story.

NEW BUSINESS:

Family Support Specialist Certification Process - No changes have been made to the process. Recommendations have been made to make changes but there was uncertainty about the structure to make the changes. Richard said maybe the old process should be followed until changes have been made and that he would set up a panel meeting in Helena the day before the next FSSAC meeting in Helena. Shelly said she would be willing to be the parent representative on the panel.

Meeting dates for next year: November 8 was set for the next scheduled meeting.

Cris stated that with Part C listed in the 5% cuts and the next full session looking at having to make bigger cuts there needs to be a renewed effort at educating legislators about the importance of Part C early intervention services.

There was discussion about forming alliances with different groups in Education. Kelly said that of the 50 postcards sent out to prospective Partners, 25 have returned that are willing to be active. Sylvia suggested contacting providers to see how they can help and Gwen suggested contacting PLUK. Kelly stated that there is a need to start educating parents now to talk to legislators.

Sandi reported that Helena parents are organizing a candidate forum. Denise suggested preparing fact sheets for the parents to hand out.

Cris offered to take the 2 past sheets and add to them if the Parent Reps would circulate them. PLUK was mentioned to help because of their wide circulation. Kelly will contact Dennis Moore. Patti mentioned contacting Public Action Network on the Internet.

Approval of minutes: A motion was made to accept the minutes from the regular meeting on April 26th and from the Special Meeting on May 23rd. Sylvia made the motion and Lucy seconded it. The motion passes unanimously.

Nominations for the MT Disabilities Service Awards: Sylvia said that in the past nominations were made by a committee from the Council. Shelly, Gwen, Novelene and Sylvia were chosen for the committee and agreed to meet during the Summit. The nominations need to be in by September 17. Kelly asked that any ideas for nominations be emailed to her by the end of August.

November elections for FSSAC Chair and Vice Chair: Council members need to be thinking about nominations from among the parent representatives for the November elections of the Chair and Vice Chair positions. There will hopefully be a new parent from Region I at the November meeting.

(The Council recessed for lunch.)

Complaints Committee: The committee will have a conference call to discuss the grievance procedure. Members of the committee include Ted, Mary Anne, Kelly, and Dan. The need for a provider on the committee was noted and Sylvia was nominated. Dan will chair the committee.

Sliding fee scale: Richard handed out information on the Parent Cost Share System from Wisconsin. A workgroup was formed at DDP to look at cost participation in DD services. Jeff has asked for an analysis report by January.

At 1:55 the Council broke up into workgroups.

Group 1 headed by Shelly met with Heather Lambert from DDP to discuss the updates that need to be made to the website.

Group 2 headed by Patti met to design an FSSAC brochure.

Group 3 headed by Gwen met to update the FSSAC Orientation Manual.

2nd DAY:

Future Directions: Ted stated that the focus of the Council should be on what needs to be done between now and the next session.

The decision was made to have Shelly and Kelly set up meeting with Joe and Jeff to discuss the issues. A letter will precede the meeting. The issues to be discussed will include Keenan's suggestion for a more active role of advisory status for the Council, issues for the next biennium and possible cuts to Part C, services being provided as part of the lifespan respite proposal, what the Council should present to them. Sandi asked that the information gathered be shared with the Council members after the meeting.

Cris will write the fact sheets and include contacts for legislators.

Sylvia will contact Dr. Ed Young and try to get Early Intervention on the agenda for the meeting of the American Academy of Pediatricians that will be in Big Sky.

Sylvia mentioned that in contacting Dennis Moore at PLUK about circulating information it would help to be definite and specific about what information and where.

Immediate goals:

Request for meeting with Jeff

Partners in Policy Making contacts

Educating Local Legislators

Fact Sheets

PLUK

Jeff to tour at DEAP

American Academy of Pediatrics meeting agenda

Agency newsletters

Contacts with schools and political base

Patti asked about the goal of the message. Cris said expansion is not realistic but maintaining funds at current levels.

Cris will talk to her Board to see if it is possible for her to register as a lobbyist for Regions 4 & 5.

Anyone who wants to can sign up for the legislative updates from Wally Melcher. Sylvia will contact him to add names.

Goals for the coming year:

1. Preparing for the legislative session.
 2. Public awareness
 3. Parent education
 4. Certification and training for FSS's
 5. Review the existing program design – ISSC representation since Millie resigned
- A letter needs to be written to Jeff to emphasize why the program needs to not be opened up to more providers, ask for an explanation, and address the confusion over provider choice. A motion was made by Patti Russ and seconded by Gwen.

Ted wanted it to be on record that if the ISSC group were to be ongoing, he would like to replace Millie as Council representation.

Ted said there might be a need to reactivate the CSPD committee that consisted of Ted, Gwen, Sandi and Sylvia. Dan said that providing training should be a CSPD activity.

Kelly stated that a letter needs to be sent to some of the Council members who have not been attending meetings or notifying of their absence. Letters might request their resignation so that they could be replaced by people who would be more active.

Sylvia will contact a parent to represent Region I on the Council and ask them to give their family story at the November meeting.

Richard will check on the Part C national meeting in DC on November 2-5.

The next FSSAC meeting will be Friday, November 8. There will be Council elections at that meeting.

As the meeting adjourned early at 11:00 Jeff Sturm, Director, and Tim Plaska, Community Services Bureau Chief, from DDP came and stayed until after 12:00 to talk to those still present.